



National Review of Restorative Justice Data Quality in Canada

By Paul Robinson, Winnifred Lee and Gabrielle Asselin

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Led by Justice Canada and the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) at Statistics Canada on behalf of the Research and Data Subcommittee of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Restorative Justice (FPTWGRJ)

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Introduction

Restorative justice functions as an overarching term for the many practices and approaches to justice that seek to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those who take responsibility for the harm to communicate and address their needs in the aftermath of an offence. Usually, restorative justice involves interaction between the offenders or persons who have caused harm, the victims, community members, and facilitators who leads the restorative justice process. Those who facilitate restorative justice processes may have various titles, such as facilitator, mediator, Circle Keeper, practitioner, community justice worker, or case worker. In Indigenous communities, Elders or Knowledge Keepers also act as facilitators. Restorative justice programs may use different types of restorative justice process models. The models most often used in the Canadian criminal justice system are restorative conferences, victim-offender mediation, and restorative circles. Although restorative justice can exist in many forms, for the purposes of this report it is a general concept and approach that encompasses the different practices, culture, history, and ideologies that are used in communities across Canada.

Restorative justice has been practised in Canada for over 50 years. However, more recently governments across Canada have been promoting the increased use of restorative justice to address issues facing the criminal justice system, notably the overrepresentation of Indigenous and vulnerable persons. This follows the 2018 decision at the table of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Deputy Ministers responsible for Justice and Public Safety, which committed to a 5 percent increase in referrals and accepted cases into restorative justice programs between 2017-2018 and 2022-2023.

To help measure progress toward the target increase of 5 percent, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Restorative Justice (i.e., Working Group on Restorative Justice) developed an annual jurisdictional scan to track and report on changes in the annual number of referrals, accepted cases, and counts of offenders and victims in restorative justice programs. The scan collects this information on restorative justice programs operated or funded by the departments and ministries participating in the Working Group on Restorative Justice for the purpose of noting annual changes in restorative justice referrals and cases. Reporting began with the 2017-2018 reference period up to the most recent cycle in 2019-2020.

The results of the scan have been used to measure and support both policy objectives and the performance of the criminal justice system. Although the jurisdictional scan provides some data on restorative justice at a national level, the quality of restorative justice data holdings by the Working Group on Restorative Justice partners continues to be affected by a number of challenges. These include:

1) Data comprehensiveness

The jurisdictional scan only includes data from restorative justice processes that are delivered or funded by a government ministry or by departments that are members of the Working Group on Restorative Justice. No one has previously assessed the full limitations of these data. For example, it is possible that some funded projects are missing from the collected data, if, for example, some programs are unable to provide data on their caseloads. Likewise, there are unfunded programs that would need to be included to provide a full picture of restorative justice in Canada.

2) Standardized definitions

It is important to ensure consistency in the definitions used by funded programs. For example, some provinces include extrajudicial sanction cases (i.e., alternative ways to address offences outside of the traditional criminal justice system) and others exclude them. To have a better understanding of how information on restorative justice cases is recorded, it would be useful to put indicators in context when analyzing the data for possible differences between jurisdictions.

3) Analytical capacity

Data points and the level of their disaggregation (i.e., how data is broken down into smaller units and more specific categories) vary considerably by jurisdiction. Across the country, there is also a mix of microdata and aggregate data holdings. Jurisdictions with microdata holdings may be able to develop more substantive analytical projects. This includes the potential to link their microdata at Statistics Canada using the Social Data Linkage Environment to develop more comprehensive datasets to effectively respond to research questions.

To address these questions and explore the scope of restorative justice data holdings in Canada, Statistics Canada and Justice Canada engaged with government and restorative justice program officials across Canada to discuss how restorative justice was being used. With Justice Canada's funding and the support from the Working Group on Restorative Justice, the engagements were held in 2023. This report summarizes the key findings of these discussions and provides recommendations for strengthening data collection and research on restorative justice in Canada.

Between fall 2023 and winter 2024, Statistics Canada held calls with representatives across the country from restorative justice programs and government ministries involved in restorative justice to discuss restorative justice data. The guided discussions focused on four primary themes: (1) data holdings (2) definitions of restorative justice (3) relevant analysis, and (4) data improvements. The methodology of this project is discussed in more detail below.

Based on these discussions, participants made a number of recommendations to improve restorative justice data and analysis over the coming years. The report highlights a summary of the key findings and recommendations below. See Appendix A for a list of more detailed recommendations.

Key findings:

- Additional funding is needed to strengthen data holdings for restorative justice. Likewise, more resources are needed to advance research to better understand restorative justice in Canada.
- Restorative justice programs should focus on improving collecting information on victims (such as the reasons why some people participate in a restorative justice process and why others do not).
- While most programs generally follow the Working Group on Restorative Justice's definition of restorative justice, some definitions differ and should be noted in the analysis.
- There is capacity to develop a national survey of restorative justice in Canada.

- Promoting findings and developing relationships between participants in different restorative justice programs are key components of establishing a research strategy.

1 Methodology

Statistics Canada and Justice Canada led the engagements online through Microsoft Teams to explore and measure the implementation, quality, and availability of restorative justice data within some Canadian jurisdictions. Statistics Canada sent out email invitations to participants, representatives from the Working Group on Restorative Justice to participate. In addition, Statistics Canada reached out to Restorative Justice programs from the Directory of Restorative Justice¹ that are not affiliated (i.e., receive funding from or report to) with any provincial, territorial, or federal government department or ministry, ensuring that diverse perspectives and experiences beyond those to the Working Group would be included. The broad range of participants helped enrich the depth and breadth of the information collected

In total, 19 sessions were held with representatives from 36 programs and ministries. Of the 36 programs, six programs from the Directory of Restorative Justice participated. These sessions were guided by a set of predetermined themes and questions set out in discussion documents sent to the participating representatives. This approach facilitated consistency across discussions while also allowing participants to explore themes and issues as they arose. Participants shared their insights, challenges, and stories in collecting restorative justice data within their program.

The overall response rate for this project, including all participating programs and jurisdictions, was 45 percent. The response rate for the Working Group on Restorative Justice members and affiliated programs was 76 percent and 21 percent for non-affiliated restorative justice programs.

Statistics Canada and Justice Canada asked questions on the characteristics of data during the discussions to address the current state of restorative justice data holdings in Canada. This section presents the data elements that are collected by restorative justice programs in Canada and the factors that affect the quality of the data. These include the following characteristics: the case management systems used to store information, the type of data collected for referrals and accepted cases, the demographics of offenders and victims, the definitions of restorative justice, and assessments of data quality.

2 Findings on restorative justice data holdings

2.1 System characteristics

System characteristics refer to the data elements and metrics that shape the overall quality and state of restorative justice data. The interfaces that record data, the case management systems used to store information, and the types of indicators that are collected on restorative justice all affect the overall

¹ The Directory of Restorative Justice is maintained by Justice Canada and is available at: [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-
jp/rj-jr/sch-rch.aspx](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/rj-jr/sch-rch.aspx).

function of restorative justice programs and data holdings. Statistics Canada and Justice Canada also explored questions about the level of detailed information (i.e., micro- or aggregate-level data), data storage format, and centralization of data during the discussions to understand the system characteristics of restorative justice programs.

What we heard:

Microdata information is held electronically by almost every organization

Most restorative justice programs responded that they collect micro-level data, which captures information for each unique case and/or individual in their database. However, the data are aggregated to maintain confidentiality by pooling individuals' responses together and summarizing the findings to ensure individuals' responses are not isolated and identified. The key findings from everyone's responses are used to support program evaluations or to develop reports and figures for funding organizations.

Almost all programs reported that they store their micro-level data electronically. However, manual data entry into the electronic database occurs when referrals or the original source of information is paper based. Furthermore, some respondents mentioned using paper forms (e.g., case notes) to supplement electronic files to fill in missing information, compare information to ensure the accuracy of details recorded, and record personal details that are not recorded in the electronic database. The few jurisdictions that are still using paper files reported that they will soon be transitioning to an electronic system. All respondents support the use of electronic case management systems, because this facilitates statistical analysis on their caseloads.

Respondents identified both the benefits and limitations of centralized data

While there are several restorative justice programs across Canada, a centralized system—whether it is through a database or case management system—can organize and standardize data across restorative justice programs in a single, cohesive space. The degree of centralized case-level data differs across the provinces and territories, with some community-level restorative justice data collected across the province and stored at a provincial or federal level case management system. Other restorative justice programs may have different case management systems or databases, therefore do not share data with their respective jurisdiction.

Community-level restorative justice programs that are funded by provincial/territorial governments are often required to provide certain indicators, such as the number of accepted cases, to a centralized agency. Most of the government ministries maintain centralized aggregated data they collect from affiliated restorative justice programs in the province/territory. Some maintain microdata information in a centralized database (with a few programs currently considering upgrading their centralized data from aggregate to microdata). At the federal level, the Indigenous Justice Program has rolled out an online interface for many of their supported restorative justice programs to adopt when entering data. This enables responses from multiple programs to be collated into a single database.

The discussions raised many benefits of a centralized database and case management systems. These include:

- consistency in the information being recorded;
- improvements to data holdings;
- accessibility to data;
- standardized data;
- ease in compiling and reporting data;
- and implementation of a streamlined approach.

Respondents generally supported the concept of centralized data, but some hesitated to support a common platform across restorative justice programs, either within a provincial/territorial jurisdiction or across jurisdictions. A standardized system could become less flexible, and some respondents raised concerns about performance or training requirements.

2.2 Data collected

Statistics Canada and Justice Canada explored four broad data elements during the discussions: referrals, accepted cases, demographic information on offenders, and demographic information on victims. Indicators on details of the crime, the source at which the referrals were provided to programs, the type of restorative justice process used, the outcomes of the case, and the demographic information on offenders and victims were also explored in the discussions.

As mentioned, 36 programs and ministries participated, including 26 organizations. The participating programs and ministries in this study included jurisdictions from: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Federal organizations. For the data collection exercise, 23 of the 36 programs and ministries responded to questions on whether they collected restorative justice data. Community-based program responses that were reported to the provincial department's centralized database were counted as a single response for the data exercise because they report similar data.

What we heard:

Statistical information on referrals is comprehensive

Referrals are entered into restorative justice systems for review in various ways. Some receive information electronically from the main referral sources (e.g., police and Crown). A few use interfaces that automatically update their system with data on the referral form so data entry is not needed. Other programs only receive paper forms, requiring manual data entry.

As indicated in Table 1, most programs collect multiple data elements on restorative justice referrals. Although a few programs did not report data on why some offenders and/or victims refused to participate and the date of the incident, the overall completion rate for the indicators on restorative justice referrals is the most comprehensive and fully covered data element.

Table 1. Data elements on restorative justice referrals, by percentage of respondents reporting

	Referrals (n=23)	
	Number ²	Percentage
Source of referral	23	100
Type of offence	23	100
Date(s) of the incident	23	100
Date of referral	22	96
Multiple offences, if applicable	22	96
Outcome of referral ¹	22	96
Reason for refusal of participation	20	87

¹. Whether referral was accepted, refused, referred elsewhere, or other outcomes.

². Note that where only partial information was collected, it was classified as collected (because the system has capacity to collect, but information may not be entered in every instance).

Many data elements are collected on accepted cases

Similar to the data on restorative justice referrals, all representatives of restorative justice programs reported information on the type of offence for accepted cases. Almost all programs collected information on the restorative justice process, agreements in place, and participants' successful completion of the program. Note that the victims can be involved without participating directly in the restorative justice process: they can be debriefed on the offence and learn about and discuss the offenders' restorative justice process. In addition, some provincial and territorial restorative justice programs require victims to participate in the restorative justice process for the case to be accepted. This contributes to the high response rate (91 percent) of the restorative justice program representatives who indicate that they collect this information. In contrast, only 52 percent of restorative justice programs collect information about the reasons why victims do not participate in the restorative justice process. This contributes to the lack of data on victims and restorative justice process that involves victims, as discussed below.

Table 2. Data elements on restorative justice accepted cases, by percentage of programs reporting

	Accepted Cases (n=23)	
	Number ⁴	Percentage
Type of crime	23	100
Multiple crimes, if applicable	22	96
Details on agreements in place	22	96
Successful completion	22	96
Start date of the case	21	91
Completion of the case	21	91
Victim not participating/ participating in the case ¹	21	91
Restorative justice process used	20	87
Reason for unsuccessful completion	20	87
Whether victims were contacted by the restorative justice program	20	87
Restorative justice model followed ²	19	83
Stage of referral to the program	17	74
Community participation in the case	16	70
Participant satisfaction with restorative justice process ³	15	65
Reason for victim not participating	12	52

¹. Includes if surrogate victims are used. Note that this indicates whether programs record victims' responses on accepting or declining to participate, and not whether they participated in restorative justice. Some programs may not record this information, or do not contact victims to ask if they want to be involved in restorative justice.

². https://icclr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20-01146_Handbook_on_Restorative_Justice_Programmes.pdf?x48887#page=35

³. Counted if either offenders or victims participated.

⁴. Note that where only partial information was collected, it was classified as collected (because the system has capacity to collect, but information may not be entered in every instance).

Demographic data are more likely to be collected on offenders than victims

Table 3 shows that there are more complete data on offenders compared with data on victims. Apart from data on sex at birth and racialized identity, there is comprehensive coverage and complete demographic data for offenders, collected by 78 percent or more programs.

Slightly more than half (52 percent) of the respondents recorded information on the racialized identity of the offenders and categorization of racialized groups was shown to vary across jurisdictions and programs. It was found that there is generally insufficient and inconsistent collection of data on racialized groups, use of unstandardized racialized categories, and lack of disaggregated racialized group categories.

The response rate for recording sex at birth was similar, with slightly more than one-half (52 percent) of programs recording this information. However, most programs reported that the sex of the offender was being phased out for new variables on gender. Gender was far more likely to be reported, with almost all restorative justice programs collecting this information.

Table 3. Demographic information collected for offenders and victims

	Offender (n=23)		Victim (n=23)	
	Number ²	Percentage	Number ²	Percentage
Sex at birth	12	52	5	22
Gender	21	91	14	61
Age ¹	23	100	15	65
Indigenous identity	18	78	12	52
Racialized groups	12	52	9	39

¹ Age data were collected in many forms: exact age, age ranges, or dichotomized categories of youth versus adults. If a program collected any form of age data, they were counted in the table.

² Note that where only partial information was collected, it was classified as collected (because the system has capacity to collect, but information may not be entered in every instance).

Programs face many challenges collecting data on victims

There is a broad disparity between how many programs collect data on the information of offenders and victims. The results of the engagements show that all restorative justice programs record some information on the offenders. On the other hand, five programs reported that no information was collected on victims.

This is especially apparent in the demographic data available for offenders and victims in Table 3. Whereas restorative justice programs often collected data on gender (91 percent), age (100 percent), and the Indigenous identity (78 percent) of the offenders, less data was collected on the gender (61 percent), age (65 percent), and Indigenous identity (52 percent) of victims.

The challenges in collecting data on victims usually lay in the referral and acceptance process. In the referral stage, information on victims is often absent on a referral form (except for contact information) because referral sources do not require it to be filled in. If a case is accepted into restorative justice, there is usually an intake process, where victims may be contacted, providing an opportunity for them to provide some additional information. However, a number of programs indicated that they are reluctant to press victims for this information (particularly for gender and ethnicity), given sensitivities regarding victims participating in restorative justice, therefore avoiding anything that may cause trauma, no matter how slight, to victims.

Despite issues collecting demographic information, restorative justice programs can collect some comprehensive data on victims that have analytical value when they focus on variables related to their participation:

- The percentage of cases when victims participated;
- The breakdown of reasons why victims did not participate; and
- The type of victim participation in a case (e.g., direct, indirect, surrogate, etc.).

The data elements listed above help classify the number of victims involved in restorative justice cases and distinguish between restorative justice cases with and without victims participating. This is important for understanding the effectiveness of different models to restorative justice programs. Developing a clear understanding of the information that needs to be collected, along with understanding definitions on restorative justice practices, models, and concepts will help restorative justice programs develop the collection mechanisms necessary to capture comprehensive data with greater analytical value.

2.3 Definitions

Defining restorative justice has been a longstanding discussion at the Working Group on Restorative Justice and in other fora focused on restorative justice. In 2018, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety endorsed the following definition of restorative justice:

[R]estorative justice is an approach to justice that seeks to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those who take responsibility for the harm to communicate about and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime. Accordingly, restorative justice processes provide opportunities for victims, offenders, and communities affected by a crime to communicate about the causes, circumstances, and impact of that crime, and to address their related needs. These processes are guided by skilled restorative justice facilitators² and can take different form³ depending on the community, program, case, participants, or circumstances.

This definition is used by the Working Group on Restorative Justice when collecting annual data for the jurisdictional scan.

For statistical analysis, a key element when using data from multiple jurisdictions and programs is to ensure that definitions are consistent. During the discussions, respondents were asked directly how their programs define restorative justice, and how closely their restorative justice caseload acceptance follows their program's definition.

What we heard:

Most programs follow the FPT Ministers of Justice and Public Safety definition of restorative justice, but approaches vary considerably, and this should be reflected in statistical analysis

Several terms have been used to describe the restorative justice process, such as “transformative justice”, “participatory justice”, and “reparative justice”. While respondents acknowledged most of the

² Those who facilitate restorative justice processes may have titles such as facilitator, mediator, Circle Keeper, practitioner, community justice worker, or case worker. In Indigenous communities, Elders or Knowledge Keepers also act as facilitators.

³ Restorative justice programs may use different types of restorative justice process models. The models most often used in the Canadian criminal justice system are restorative conferences, victim-offender mediation, and restorative circles.

terms, almost all respondents incorporate “restorative” when defining and describing their approach to justice and their operations, which closely aligns with the definition of the Working Group on Restorative Justice. As one respondent indicated, the term “participatory justice” may be a more accurate description of their program, particularly from victims’ perspective. However, they also adopt the term “restorative justice” given that “restorative justice” is more commonly used and known to the general public. By following the definition that is used by the Working Group on Restorative Justice, this binds participants and allows data to fit under the overarching or umbrella term of restorative justice. However, the details about how programs approach justice can vary. These details need to be addressed in statistical analyses to enhance the relevance of the research.

The one exception, discussed in the section below, is Indigenous Justice Programs, which are Indigenous community-based justice programs that have broad mandates and services that address harm and other circumstances. Many Indigenous Justice Programs use restorative justice approaches and provide restorative justice services, but may also offer treatment options other than restorative justice. Indigenous Justice Programs in particular have indicated that their programs are distinct from other restorative justice programs. As some respondents asserted, Indigenous communities have historically practised their own forms of restorative approaches, which fit to a certain extent with the definition of the Working Group on Restorative Justice, but can be different. For example, how justice is practised can vary significantly by community according to their traditions, and there is no uniformity to how the programs are administered across the country. These Indigenous community-based justice programs focus on restoring the community and the ability to empower individuals to continue their work and life in a better way. Because of this different approach to justice, Indigenous community-based justice programs, while they share commonalities with restorative justice, may view themselves as distinct from other restorative justice programs. Consequently, statistical analysis on restorative justice that combines Indigenous community-based justice programs with other restorative justice programs can limit the utility of the results for Indigenous Justice programs.

While Indigenous Justice Programs highlighted the importance of offenders and community members being involved in restorative justice practices, some respondents also brought up the importance of victims participating in restorative justice processes. Some restorative justice programs adhere to a strict definition that requires victims to be involved in restorative justice processes. In other words, restorative justice cases will not proceed if victims are not involved.

For other programs, restorative justice cases can proceed without victims participating in the process. These cases would still be classified as restorative justice, with a focus on the offender accountability. Thus, it is important in the analysis to distinguish cases based on whether victims were involved and the processes used. As with Indigenous community-based justice programs, these cases have common principles, but the circumstances are different and need to be reflected in statistical analysis.

Some programs do not use the terms “offender” and “victim”

Although not directly asked of respondents in the discussions, it became apparent that some restorative justice programs’ respondents did not refer to “offender” and “victim.” Rather, these programs used alternative terminology: “person responsible for causing harm” and “person harmed.” This terminology is considered a better fit, given the restorative justice approach to justice. On the other hand, many

restorative justice programs in the criminal justice system are designed around terminologies used in the Criminal Code, and continue to use such words as offence, offender, accused, victim.

Definitions of victim participation may vary

Although not directly brought up with participants, respondents in a few discussions highlighted the lack of consistent definitions for the different types of victim participation in a restorative justice case, particularly direct, indirect, and surrogate victim participation. This issue affects how data on victims are understood and compared. One respondent mentioned that the distinction between victims and community can be blurred. For example, the respondent asked, “Could the affected friends and family be considered victims based on their experience of victimization resulting from a drug crime? Or, in the case of an incident where racial slurs are spray painted on public property, could members of that community be considered victims?” More clarity about these various situations and how they are classified would improve data collection in this area.

This issue is particularly acute when collecting front-line restorative justice data from community programs, who may not be familiar with the nuances between the different types of participation. When coupled with the previously mentioned issues around collecting data on victims and missing data points, the quality of data on victims is reduced. This highlights the need to focus attention on improving the availability of data on victim participation, and more structure and consistency when collecting data on victims to improve its reliability.

Measures of success and terminology differ across programs

During the engagement, respondents in the restorative justice programs discussed a number of variations in how they defined the successful completion of a case once it was accepted into their program. For some programs, success was based on the act of diversion: taking a case out of the traditional criminal justice system and resolving the matter using community-based justice, or restorative justice approaches to justice, or having the participants attend sessions and actively participate. For other programs, success was related to the agreements that were developed, outlining the process of restoring and healing. Once all or most of the steps in the agreement were followed through, the case was considered successfully completed. In cases where victims did not participate in the restorative justice process, the process is more offender-focused.

Success is therefore measured through the steps taken by the offenders and their personal growth. However, some respondents mentioned the limitations of successful completion of restorative justice cases if victims were not involved in the process. In these situations, there may be community pressure to successfully integrate the offender back into the community, but this neglects the sense of safety for victims, especially for serious offending. If victims were not involved in the restorative justice process, they may not be aware or agree to the terms developed from the restorative justice process, thus overlooking the priorities and needs of victims.

What constitutes successful completion of restorative justice cases therefore varies considerably and programs indicate that it is difficult to develop a standard definition. Some programs often mentioned that they do not use terms like “successful” and “unsuccessful”. Rather, they use terms like “discontinued” and “completed” to better reflect their practice, given that success is a subjective term

and successful completion could either be minimal (e.g., attend an RJ session) or large (e.g., a written agreement meeting a number of requirements), depending on the needs of the participants. As well, success is often measured by participants completing an evaluation post-engagement. Those data are difficult to obtain and analyze, and can be challenging to quantify.

For statistical analysis, restorative justice programs are kept distinct from other diversion programs

For the most part, respondents do not categorize diversion programs such as youth justice conferences, extrajudicial sanctions, and alternative measures cases as restorative justice,⁴ although in certain instances these programs may draw on restorative justice principles. With this limited overlap, the cases that go through restorative justice are distinct from other common diversion programs in the statistical analysis on restorative justice.

A few respondents mentioned the influence of restorative justice principles on other systems in their jurisdictions. They provided examples of wellness courts, domestic violence courts, and schools looking to take a restorative approach. Expanding the use of restorative justice principles beyond the criminal justice system is considered a “transformative” approach to justice, where restorative justice principles are considered within all parts of the justice system.

For statistical analysis, it would be difficult to include these examples as restorative justice, given considerable jurisdictional differences and the potential misunderstanding of other types of interventions and outcomes being classified as restorative justice. However, it would be useful context to include examples of how restorative justice may be used to transform the justice system.

2.4 Data quality assessment

As part of the engagement, respondents were asked to self-assess the quality of their data holdings. This includes assessing a list of components (such as comprehensiveness or timeliness) that affects the data holdings, as well as providing an overall rating of their data quality.

What we heard:

A majority of jurisdictions perceived their overall data quality to be adequate

Almost all respondents from restorative justice programs self-rated the quality of their data holdings as at an adequate level or higher. This shows that most respondents have confidence in their program’s data systems. Less common responses were at the extreme ends of the scale: two respondents self-reported poor to below average data quality and two reported excellent data quality for their restorative justice programs.

⁴ In some provinces, restorative justice programs are labelled as extrajudicial sanctions (EJS) and alternative measures programs (AM). However, the approaches adopted by these programs adhere to general definitions of restorative justice. This can cause some confusion, as EJS and AMs in other provinces do not follow restorative justice principles. In these examples, it’s the processes used by the programs, not the names, that should be considered.

Table 4. Restorative justice programs’ self-assessment of restorative justice data

	Number of restorative justice programs (n=19)	
	Number	Percentage
Poor/Below average	2	10.5
Fair/Adequate	11	57.9
Good	4	21.1
Excellent	2	10.5

Factors of timeliness, detail, and comprehensiveness were largely present in restorative justice data holdings

Factors that were used to assess the data quality included data comprehensiveness, format, detail, timeliness, completeness, accuracy, and availability. Table 5 displays the list of data quality elements and the description that was used to measure overall data quality. Respondents who participated in this exercise were asked to self-assess the restorative justice data holdings for each element.

Overall, the elements of data quality that are mostly present in restorative justice data systems are comprehensiveness (90.5 percent), electronic format (90.5 percent), micro-level of detailed data (95.5 percent), timeliness (100 percent), and availability (90 percent). Most restorative justice data administrators reported few to no issues in the timeliness of accessing, processing, and reporting data. Programs are able to respond to data requests fairly quickly with no delays. An issue mentioned in the timeliness of data was that the delays in receiving referrals from a shared interface can interrupt the data collection of accepted cases, but otherwise the data are entered fairly quickly into the system.

Table 5. Results of restorative justice programs data quality

Data quality element	Restorative justice programs self-rated data quality	
	Number	Percentage
Timeliness: Processing data relatively quickly (n=21)	21	100.0
Detail: Programs collecting micro-level data (n=22)	21	95.5
Format: Electronic database (n=21)	19	90.5
Comprehensiveness: Programs collecting full data (n=21)	19	90.5
Availability: Programs able to respond to data easily (n=20)	18	90.0
Accuracy: Accurate data with few to no data errors (n=16)	12	75.0
Completeness: Complete data without missing elements (n=18)	11	61.1

Note: Not all respondents during the engagements provided a response to the data quality exercise. The percentage is therefore calculated based on the number of those who self-rated good data quality on the data quality element, divided by the total sample size of those who responded to the exercise.

Most data quality issues stem from incomplete and potential data errors

Although the results from Table 5 shows that programs reported that most of the components of quality were present in their data, many reported that they face challenges in certain areas of their data holdings. Table 5 reveals that only 61.6 percent of respondents reported complete data. As previous tables have shown, complete data were more likely to be found in indicators from the referral (Table 1) and accepted cases (Table 2), but less so for demographic variables, particularly for victims (Table 3).

Inaccuracies and incomplete data contribute to the majority of data quality issues and had the lowest response rate to these indicators. Some respondents were in the process of assessing and reviewing their data so they were unable to confirm the state of their data at the time of the engagement. However, for respondents who did, Table 5 shows that only 75 percent of respondents can confidently say their restorative justice data are accurate. Similarly, concerning the completeness of data, many noted that data accuracy varied depending on the type of data collected. For example, a few programs have mentioned that in their case management system, adult data are reliable but not youth data.

Most programs have internal data validation processes

Although almost all restorative justice programs store data in an electronic database, data are mostly entered manually from paper files that are received from referral sources. As a result, errors in data entry can occur. Respondents shared their concerns about human errors affecting the accuracy of their data as a result of entering incorrect information in the database. Despite accuracy being one of the elements with a low response rate, many respondents explained that they have added measures to alleviate the data errors. For example, data are verified at many levels of review before they are approved for dissemination purposes. Managers or directors usually review the output and flag any

inconsistencies or skewed findings for case managers to address and resolve. Furthermore, many respondents stated that they are transitioning to a new software and information management system that will address data errors if they appear in the system.

Respondents listed some limitations of current restorative justice data collection systems as well as ideas for improvement

Restorative justice programs have limited resources to pursue program objectives. This has an impact both in data validation and on research. As an example, executive directors of restorative justice programs commented that one of their duties is to validate the completeness of data entry and to follow up with case managers about incomplete or inconsistent data. Other respondents said that they would like to do more of their own research with their data, but there was not enough staff with the necessary skills. Improved systems that can streamline the data collection process and flag data inconsistencies can speed up the efficiency of the process, freeing up time for respondents to work on other tasks. To improve data quality and free up staff time, some respondents have suggested that investing more in systems is necessary, to increase automation and responsiveness, to make data entry more intuitive, and to reduce the burden of data collection on staff. Many of the respondents are in the process of upgrading their case management systems, but even these enhancements sometimes fall short. Smaller programs in particular often have to settle for systems with lesser utilities because the cost of better software is beyond their budget. If funding or software were made available to them, this could potentially enhance data quality, while freeing up staff time to focus on other priorities.

A few respondents mentioned developing software platforms that could be shared among restorative justice programs, similar to the new platform Justice Canada has launched for its Indigenous Justice Program. Some of the benefits mentioned include improved consistency between programs, because the structure of the database and coding would be consistent, and designed for program needs. Some restorative justice programs, particularly those using a province-wide case management system, have reported that these systems are often adopted from other case management systems in the jurisdiction (such as those developed for correctional services). As a result, they tend to be offender-focused, losing some detail on victims and community involvement. A data processing system designed specifically to be used by restorative justice programs, or tailoring existing systems to include restorative justice program needs (e.g., including data on victims), could address this limitation.

Some respondents mentioned that they had some concerns about adopting a shared platform. One concern was the lack of customization for the circumstances of the program: a potential inability to incorporate data elements in the program would be considered important but might not be covered by the shared case management system. Another concern was support and responsiveness: if technical issues arise, they might not be easy to resolve and could result in unnecessary delays or affect operations. Also, there remains the question of IT support. Would restorative justice programs be responsible for their own support (which would raise the issue of capacity) or would there be a centralized organization providing support (which would raise the issue of cost)?

Thus, several ideas were provided and suggestions made for further developing data/case management systems used by restorative justice programs. While no clear answers came out of the discussions, it will be important to continue the dialogue on this issue. Improving the capacity and

responsiveness of the data systems being used will provide major contributions in improving the quality of restorative justice data holdings.

3 Analysis of restorative justice data

A primary objective of the engagement was to identify research topics to prioritize. As restorative justice increases its profile within the criminal justice system, there is more demand for statistical information to better understand it. This demand is illustrated by the development of a National Restorative Justice Research Network,⁵ which is expected to play a leading role in promoting restorative justice research over the coming years. This section highlights the suggestions from restorative justice program respondents on the research topics most relevant for them to further policy development and support for restorative justice in Canada.

3.1 Standard national indicators

Most restorative justice programs use standard national indicators to measure the scope of justice programs in Canada. Indicators are used to identify trends and to understand if the use of a justice program is increasing or decreasing in nominal numbers and relative to other criminal justice programs and services over a period of time. These indicators are often analyzed to describe the characteristics of justice programs, and how these basic characteristics can change over time. Currently, there is minimal national-level annual data on restorative justice caseloads to measure its use and characteristics. Developing these indicators is key for research, particularly for understanding the impacts on restorative justice following policy or legislative changes.

What we heard:

National indicators in the Working Group on Restorative Justice jurisdictional scan provide useful information

The Working Group on Restorative Justice has been producing an annual report, referred to as the [jurisdictional scan](https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2020-resjus-jusrep/index-en.aspx) (<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2020-resjus-jusrep/index-en.aspx>), on the number of restorative justice cases, referrals, accepted cases, offenders, and victims across Canada since 2017-2018. The scan was developed in response to the Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety target to increase restorative justice referrals and cases by 5 percent between the baseline year 2017-2018 and 2022-2023. The Working Group on Restorative Justice was

⁵ Recognizing the important role that raising awareness through data and research can play in increasing the understanding and use of restorative justice in Canada, a National Restorative Justice Research Network (Research Network) is being developed. The Research Network intends to build on existing efforts and create an inclusive forum for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to collaborate across government, community, and academic sectors, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous spaces. The Research Network will provide an opportunity to create connections between sectors (e.g., justice, education, health, social), promote and support community-based resolutions to address conflict and harm, learn about best practices, build knowledge, and identify how we can tell the restorative justice story in Canada through data and research. A principal role of the Research Network will be to identify a range of “indicators” to map the restorative justice landscape, which is essential to increasing how widely it will be used.

tasked with the priority of measuring the progress towards this target. The scan represents the first project in Canada to track the national restorative justice caseload over time.

Most respondents were aware of the scan and found it useful. All respondents supported the idea of national data collection or a national survey on restorative justice to produce indicators at both national and provincial/territorial levels. These data collection exercises are useful for placing their own programs within the larger picture. In addition, trend data showing the increase in the use of restorative justice can create a certain momentum that could attract more investment. Some respondents said the jurisdictional scan was valuable because it provided a model of the important data points to collect about restorative justice. Newer programs in particular, said the scan was a useful source of information to determine what type of information on restorative justice needs to be collected.

Respondents noted a few limitations with the report. First, the scan lacked sufficient detail to allow for appropriate comparisons, for example, why it was important to organize statistical information by type of program (Indigenous community-based justice programs, victim participation required, etc.). This breakdown is not provided in the scan; data from the different types of programs are combined as the restorative justice caseload. Some respondents also mentioned the amount of missing data in the report: many of the breakdowns (e.g., number of referrals by source, offenders by age, sex, ethnic origin, etc.) could not be provided for the full caseload.

Many restorative justice programs have developed internal indicators but require national definitions to make data consistent

Most restorative justice programs have internal reports on their caseloads so they can report regularly to organizations that are funding their services or to their board of directors. For the most part, the reports include basic indicators (e.g., number of referrals or accepted cases), and some demographic information on participants (e.g., accepted cases by age group of the offenders, etc.).

To facilitate this internal reporting, many programs track referrals and caseloads electronically. These tracking mechanisms draw on data from a database into a template that contains aggregated information on the number of referrals and case counts. These data are usually timely and the templates are updated with changes several times a year. Because the purpose of the counts is for reporting, the data in these templates are often limited to variables related to their reporting requirements. For example, the source of referrals is often collected by programs for internal analysis and reporting; however, they do not include the full range of information on restorative justice referrals and cases that could be analyzed.

This process helps to facilitate data reporting. It streamlines the required information that programs need to collect and enables restorative justice programs to communicate key data points quickly. However, the data tabulated from one program to another may vary, based on information that each program deems important for their internal use and what their external partners are requesting. To make it easier to collect data and centralize it at a provincial, territorial, or national level, some respondents said they would need national data requirements or standards that they could build into their systems. They noted that they could update their reports to include this information. Additional support, such as training programs on definitions of restorative justice, would also be beneficial.

The majority of programs can contribute to a national data collection exercise

The Working Group on Restorative Justice scan focused only on information collected from restorative justice programs that receive funding directly from federal, provincial, or territorial governments. However, many programs exist without government funding. As a result, their caseloads were excluded from the indicators and the national totals for referrals and accepted cases in the scan were undercounted. This gap was noted in the scan. It has been raised as a limitation when presenting results.

Some programs that do not receive direct funding from ministries and departments participating in the Working Group on Restorative Justice were also part of the engagement. They mentioned that they maintain collection processes and databases that are similar to those of the restorative justice programs included in the jurisdictional scan. A priority for them was the need to summarize and report data to partners (e.g., a board of directors, funders, referral sources). When discussing the possibilities for national data collection, these programs noted that they were interested in participating if the response burden of reporting current and additional indicators would not impede their work. Given that the scan already fully covers restorative justice programs funded through the Working Group on Restorative Justice, adding new restorative justice programs for the key indicators, including data from programs not affiliated with the Working Group, would provide a true reflection of restorative justice caseloads in Canada.

Restorative justice programs are diverse, and for a national survey, collecting data from all restorative justice programs in Canada will be challenging. Adding to the complexity of inclusiveness, not all the programs are recognized and can be missed in the participant list. However, if a sample of programs could participate, researchers could leverage these responses to estimate national totals for key indicators, such as referrals and accepted cases.

Respondents highlighted adding new indicators/variables of interest for research

During the engagement, some respondents highlighted additional variables and indicators of interest for future research, either as part of a set of national indicators or as a special study:

- Some respondents suggested collecting the **length of time a restorative justice case takes to complete**, as measured once a case is completed or is discontinued. How long do restorative justice cases stay active? Does this affect the case, including the effects it has on resourcing? One caveat with this suggestion is that in some programs, closing files is not always done in a timely manner, resulting in potential issues with data quality.
- Another variable of interest is **the length of time from the incident or charge to the referral to restorative justice**. Some respondents mentioned that it took more than a year or two in some of their cases from the charge before the case was referred to restorative justice. The significant amount of time elapsing between the incident and the referral impacted the effectiveness of a restorative justice process, according to some respondents.
- Another suggestion was to integrate restorative justice data with court data and other diversion programs, such as alternative measures, drug treatment courts, etc. By adding diversion programs, this can establish **diversion rates**. This would allow all diversions in a jurisdiction to be estimated, with a proportion going to various diversionary programs (e.g., court, specialized

courts, alternative measures, restorative justice) being calculated. This would provide a better understanding of how restorative justice is being used, and how it compares with other justice programs. It was also argued that this is a better measure than comparing year-over-year referrals and case totals, because the measure would control for impacts, such as whether criminal cases were reduced overall, when assessing the use of restorative justice.

- Finally, one program maintains a set of variables on the **contributing factors** for the offence. They noted that in many cases, the root causes were the same. They were often related to mental health/substance abuse issues, or offenders retaliating after being bullied. The program developed a variable in their system to categorize these factors, based on discussions with the participants in the case. As an example, they used the information to develop a restorative justice program in partnership with local schools, because a significant portion of their caseload was retaliation events against bullying.

3.2 Disaggregated data

The disaggregation of data is the breakdown of statistics into sub-categories such as gender, race, age, income level, or a combination of these and other categories, and in as specific a location as possible. Disaggregated data allow researchers to explore key differences in the experiences of specific population groups. These may be hidden when only results for the total population are being used.

What we heard:

Disaggregated data analysis is useful in identifying underserved communities in restorative justice programs

Respondents were asked about the importance of disaggregated data for restorative justice. Most said that disaggregated data analysis is important, particularly for identifying gender, age, and Indigenous and racialized identity. Disaggregated data is mainly used to identify under-served populations. For example, by looking at the breakdown of accepted cases by racialized identity, the analysis could reveal that certain communities are under-represented in restorative justice. This would identify potential issues with the referral process. Disaggregated data are also important for victims. For example, examining victims' refusal to participate by the racialized identity of the victims may indicate differences in certain populations' reluctance to engage in restorative justice processes. That information could be used to review the cultural appropriateness of communication or education material for restorative justice practices.

A few respondents commented on how disaggregated data is useful in evaluation and outcome studies in seeing how the impact of restorative justice differs across different groups of participants. One respondent mentioned that more focused research on the models of RJ being used was needed (e.g., victim-offender dialogue, family group conferences, community justice conferences) to identify whether certain models work better with particular populations. These findings could be used to refine service delivery to improve overall outcomes.

Disaggregated data analysis should be understood within the context of the criminal justice system and not the general population when identifying under-represented communities

For example, one respondent pointed out that more than 50 percent of offenders in their restorative justice program are women. While this may be comparable to the general population, this finding shows a big distinction between restorative justice and other criminal justice processes (where the vast majority of individuals are men).

The need for data on gender, age, and language were highlighted

Some respondents highlighted the need to better **identify cases involving young adults (typically ages 18 to 25)**. For programs that supervise adults, a few respondents noted that the bulk of their adult caseload was young adults. This age group can be more similar to youth in emotional development than to older adults, in many respects, and information about restorative justice should be available for this age group. The age breakdown of adults is often missing (while most programs capture date of birth, it is the age calculation to determine an individual's age at a specific point in time that may be challenging).

Although it was not collected by most restorative justice programs, **first language of participants** was identified as a potential variable. Restorative justice programs provide a service, and it is important to identify if the services are being provided in the preferred languages of the participants involved. This data element could provide evidence of gaps in services, particularly to minority English populations, French populations, or to Indigenous or racialized communities. Other variables mentioned, although not collected by restorative justice programs, include identifying people who identify with the **2SLGBTQI+ community** and the **size of the community** the parties live in. Programs in large communities with diverse populations sometimes collect information on **immigration status** and **country of birth** of the participants.

Disaggregated data analysis is hindered by inconsistent data collection

Most restorative justice programs collect disaggregated data, however, the quality of this information is not always adequate. Of particular concern is the amount of missing data. Equally important, however, are disaggregated data from other criminal justice system programs that are used to compare restorative justice data. Improvements are underway (e.g., Statistics Canada is updating police data to collect data on Indigenous identities and racialized groups for offenders and victims in criminal incidents) but it will take some time before these disaggregated data components are available.

Disaggregating by referral source was also of interest to some respondents

Some respondents are also interested in disaggregating the referral source (e.g., police detachments located in urban vs. rural areas). A few restorative justice programs (particularly those covering a large geographic area) track referrals by police detachment to identify the areas with the fewest relative number of referrals. This type of data allows the programs to focus police activities on specific areas to increase referrals.

Some respondents would like to see research on trends in victim participation

Although the collection of information on victims is incomplete and has some challenges (see section 2), it would be useful for programs that have comprehensive data on victims to further analyze the data to better understand caseload indicators from the victims' perspective. For example, does the degree of victim participation vary by the type of offence associated with the case (e.g., do proportionally more victims participate in assault cases than cases of theft?). Also, does victim participation vary by age, by gender, by ethnicity, etc.?

3.3 Outcome and Return on Investment (ROI) studies

Outcome studies are typically longitudinal studies that measure participants' outcomes after they have been involved in a restorative justice process. Outcomes are usually measured at regular intervals, typically called follow-up periods (e.g., 1 year, 2 years, 5 years) after a defined reference event is determined by the program, which is usually the date the restorative justice case is closed).⁶

The most common types of outcome studies are recontact and recidivism studies,⁷ focused on offenders. These are measures of offenders coming back into the justice system, when they reoffend or are suspected of reoffending. Statistics Canada's recent article on recontact,⁸ and the evaluation of the Indigenous Justice Program,⁹ using recidivism indicators, were cited by participants as very useful reports. Another type of outcome study is desistance studies, which measures how effectively offenders going through a justice process re-integrate back into society.

What we heard:

Strong support from respondents in developing outcome studies and indicators for restorative justice participants

Overall, all participants strongly supported the development of outcome studies, such as measuring the extent of recontact offenders had with the criminal justice system or desistance after participating in a restorative justice process and other outcomes, for offenders as well as for victims. Outcome studies are effective in understanding the outcomes and impacts of restorative justice. They can provide evidence to the public, to referral sources, and to government officials to support funding and resources for more restorative justice initiatives.

Outcome studies can be an important indicator of how restorative justice affects the socio-economic, health, and psychological conditions of the participants and communities involved in the offence. To broaden the support for restorative justice, it is critical that evidence and more research is dedicated to understanding the impacts of restorative justice models. One of the tools researchers most rely on to do this is outcome studies.

⁶ Depending on the analytical objectives, the reference period could also be the start date of the case, the date of arrest, the date of the offence, etc.

⁷ Recontact studies are similar to recidivism studies, though recidivism examines re-convictions whereas recontact may not always result to a charge, but nonetheless shows that the offender came into contact with the criminal justice system.

⁸ [The Daily — Half of adults sentenced to provincial correctional programs were reconvicted within three years, mostly for non-violent offences](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240223/dq240223b-eng.htm) (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240223/dq240223b-eng.htm>)

⁹ https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/rep-rap/2021/indigenous-autochtone/pdf/EN_IJP%20Report_Final2.pdf

Outcome studies can also be an important tool for evaluating restorative justice programming. Having data that show how restorative justice facilitates offenders' reintegration into society or that recontacts are declining is important evidence in measuring its effectiveness during program evaluation. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that this work is essential, not from a "value for money" approach to program evaluation, but internally, to ensure that their program is on the right track and functioning effectively.

In addition to understanding the effectiveness of restorative justice, outcomes should be compared against other criminal justice programming to better comprehend how restorative justice differs from the traditional criminal justice system. Respondents gave near-unanimous support for developing this comparative analysis. Some mentioned that comparing the outcomes of persons sentenced to custody (not just those going through a community process) with those of the restorative justice group could be relevant in demonstrating the usefulness of restorative justice.

Most programs have the technical capacity for detailed outcome studies but policy considerations remain a hurdle

Restorative justice programs have some capacity for outcome studies within their own databases. For example, most databases store case-level data and can identify people who return to the restorative justice program on new offences, thus allowing for recontact studies. Some jurisdictions with centralized systems across justice programs can identify recontact more broadly, because recontact is not limited to only data from restorative justice programs but extends to other justice system data as well.

The main advantage of limiting outcome analysis to data held by restorative justice programs is how easy it is to analyze it. That includes simplifying linkages of data. One drawback is that the intersections of other systems (e.g., health and education) will be missed, thus limits the analysis to recontacts with the restorative justice program.

An alternative, and more widely used, approach to developing outcome studies is data integration. With this approach, restorative justice data would be integrated with other sources of information. These are typically administrative datasets, not just in the justice domain (such as police, courts, or corrections) but also other sectors, such as health, education, labour, and income. Data integration and linkages can be fulfilled through the Social Data Linkage Environment¹⁰ (see footnote 14 for more details, including the limitations of data linkages); they can reduce the amount of work of integrating data while protecting, to the largest extent possible, individual privacy.

Restorative justice programs follow either provincial-level guidelines or program-level policies on data privacy

Many restorative justice programs involved in the engagement have policies about data governance. Most restorative justice programs rely on established government-wide policy legislation on freedom of information and the protection of sensitive data, supplemented by program-specific policy on disclosure and confidentiality. Community-based restorative justice programs that are independent from governments have their own set of policies and may not be bound by government ministry policy. This

¹⁰ <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/sdle/index>

creates a diverse policy framework. Programs dealing with youth also have to abide by Part 6 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, which places a number of requirements on programs to protect the privacy of young persons. Many programs have retention policies that limit the amount of time that data can be stored on their systems before records have to be sealed. Since outcome studies require several years of data to establish a follow-up period, these policies could reduce the amount of information available for use in research studies.

Very few restorative justice programs shared their data. Restorative justice representatives mentioned that they were reluctant to share information because of privacy concerns. These concerns are heightened for victims so they can avoid further harm, particularly in cases where the victims may not be supported in their decision to participate in a restorative justice process.

Some respondents from various jurisdictions did have data sharing agreements in place, either with other government departments in their jurisdiction or with academics to use restorative justice data for research. For Statistics Canada, Justice Canada, or any other external party looking to develop data integration with data from restorative justice programs, addressing diverse policy considerations and the privacy concerns of restorative justice programs will be an essential first step for any potential project.

Outcome studies should also focus on victims

While less discussion was devoted to victims for this topic, some respondents brought up the need to consider outcome studies for victims as well. Respondents were interested in victims' health and socio-economic outcomes after a restorative justice process, perhaps comparing outcomes with victims from other criminal justice system processes. The thinking was that crime can have significant psychological, physical, social, and economical impacts on victims, and respondents were interested in any data that could show restorative justice addressing and reducing these impacts. Given the complexity of integrating criminal justice system data and health data, outcome studies on victims will need data integration in other areas of research such as housing or employment that can reflect the wellbeing of victims after participating in a restorative justice process. This will need to address the data sharing and privacy considerations of the restorative justice data holders.

Measuring effectiveness needs to focus on more than outcome studies

While there is wide-ranging support for outcome and recontact studies, some respondents cautioned that focusing only on the impact of restorative justice in outcome studies, particularly recidivism, as a measure of effectiveness is too narrow to capture the true essence of restorative justice. They concede that while outcome studies are given much weight in the research and policy fields, this could be a disservice if recontact studies are the only measure used in evaluation. Some concerns respondents raised about outcome studies include:

- the cost, time, and expertise to develop the datasets and do the analysis;
- the ambiguous nature of recidivism rates (i.e., is a rate of 25 percent a good result, a bad result, somewhere in between?); and

- the fact that recidivism rates rarely move over time, and if they do, can be influenced by different factors (such as legislative change, referral patterns, etc.) that are outside of restorative justice processes.

For these respondents, how the effectiveness of restorative justice is judged needs to be broader than just reduced recidivism. Researchers should incorporate a wide range of measures (some of which are detailed in other parts of this section) to address this.

Return on investment and social return on investment studies are effective tools in demonstrating “value of money” to program funders

Return on investment studies,^{11,12} in the restorative justice context, calculate the amount of money restorative justice saves or returns to government compared with what funding investments are made. If the money saved is greater than the funding invested, it is considered profitable for government, reducing overall expenditures. Most of these studies focus on the savings resulting from diverting criminal cases from a court process into restorative justice.

A social return of investment study is similar but focuses on factors not easily quantified into dollar amounts. Social return on investment measures the positive outcomes of funding investments (trying to convert these benefits to a dollar value), rather than the financial output of these investments. In a restorative justice example, positive outcomes may increase participants’ quality of life and may reduce demands on social services or the health system in the long term, thus increasing returns on investment. Social return of investments can also affect the community and victims, though more research is needed to explore the exact outcomes.

During the engagements, return on investment studies were often not discussed because the discussion document did not include a specific question on this topic. However, a few respondents mentioned the effectiveness of return on investment studies to demonstrate the “value for money” of investments in restorative justice to decision makers in government. Funding is an important issue for restorative justice programs. Many discussions mentioned the importance of using research as an evidence base to help secure more stable and sustained funding for restorative justice. Even in provinces where the police, Crown prosecutors, and government officials have effectively “bought in” to restorative justice, funding issues remain and limit the ability of programs to ensure appropriate scaling of restorative justice to meet demand. The results of return on investment studies would be a key component to any funding request, thus the support for this type of analysis.

A few respondents also referenced social return on investment studies. While no specific social return on investment studies seem to have been done in a national context for Canada, a few respondents speculated that if the value of the positive social outcomes of restorative justice were included in a return on investment, the returns of restorative justice would likely be greater than what is being shown in the current return on investment studies.

¹¹ https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/rep-rap/2021/indigenous-autochtone/pdf/EN_IJP_Recidivism_Costing_Summary_Final.pdf

¹² https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/rep-rap/2021/indigenous-autochtone/pdf/EN_IJP%20Report_Final2.pdf

Some respondents mentioned that both types of studies (i.e., return on investment and social return on investment) should be comparable across different justice programs (i.e., both types of studies on restorative justice compared with probation or custody interventions for a similar caseload). Even more basic studies such as comparing the cost of a restorative justice diversion case vs. the cost of funding a similar case through the traditional justice system could be effective in demonstrating the value of restorative justice.

Like outcome studies, both types of studies will likely require integrating restorative justice data with other datasets to develop the formulas for calculating these measures. The privacy and policy considerations and challenges for sharing identifiable information on restorative justice clients will likely be the same for these studies.

3.4 Qualitative data

Qualitative data research captures interpretations and descriptions of a phenomenon, as opposed to quantitative research, which collects countable and measurable data points. Qualitative data are often collected as part of a narrative or story told by individuals to a researcher, who then uses the commentary to draw conclusions about the topic being researched. Qualitative data allow researchers to go more in-depth on a topic with subjects. It is particularly useful in gathering evidence about attitudes and behaviours, providing richer context about the phenomenon being studied.

Some respondents also indicated interest in developing in-depth questionnaires to collect data about offenders' and victims' opinions and thoughts about restorative justice; what they experienced going through the process, primarily using rating scales to a variety of questions about whether their needs were met or would they recommend this approach. This type of research could provide insight into how restorative justice contributes to the well-being of offenders and victims, as well as understanding their pathways into restorative justice. Querying participants at both intake and exit could reveal valuable findings. Some restorative justice programs already engage in this type of research.

Overall, almost every respondent highlighted the importance of using qualitative data and post-process feedback to better understand restorative justice.

What we heard:

Narratives and exit surveys are used by restorative justice programs to emphasize the impacts of restorative justice on participants

A few restorative justice programs collect some qualitative data, either through exit interviews, participant satisfaction surveys, or through case notes. A few programs have partnered with researchers to do evaluation projects or studies using qualitative data. Data collection was often focused on the perspectives of offenders and/or victims. Comments obtained from the narratives are often included in documents like annual reports or evaluations to emphasize the positive impacts restorative justice had on program participants. For these respondents, qualitative data provided the necessary context that was often missing in quantitative figures to better understand the benefits of restorative justice. As one respondent stated, personalizing and humanizing the people going through restorative justice processes has been successful in making people believe in restorative justice.

Respondents who collected some qualitative data noted several problems with their approach to data collection. Completion rates were often spotty, leading to a small and inconsistent sample size. For other jurisdictions collecting qualitative data informally through case notes, the information may focus only on successful cases. Thus, it does not explore broader perspectives from both successful and challenging cases. Finally, respondents noted that getting participants to share their experiences, even if anonymized, is challenging, because it is difficult for the participants to recount emotional experiences where they felt vulnerable or talked about sensitive issues. Despite the challenges, as one respondent put it, they hear a lot of qualitative information that could be highly valuable (i.e., “I can sleep again,” “I feel alive again,” “I can move forward now”) but they need to define these abstractions better and determine how to use them effectively in restorative justice contexts.

Qualitative research is needed to better explain restorative justice

Respondents were keen on furthering the use of qualitative data in research on restorative justice. During the various discussions, respondents listed a series of important research topics that could only be addressed through participants’ qualitative or questionnaire-based feedback after they had gone through a restorative justice process. These topics include:

- Understanding the needs of offenders and victims in a restorative justice process, and whether their needs were met;
- Whether they felt heard after participating in a restorative justice process;
- The reasons why they chose to participate in restorative justice, and in-depth reasons why offenders and/or victims decided not to participate;
- Opinions about what participants experienced, including the most appreciated and least favourable aspects of a restorative justice process, what they would change about it, and whether they would recommend restorative justice to others;
- Assessing the benefits (e.g., physical, psychological, other) for victims in comparison with the traditional adversarial system;
- Examining referral sources’ decision making and how they determine appropriate cases for restorative justice;
- Understanding the healing process of the participants involved;
- Addressing the stereotype that restorative justice is “soft on crime” through offenders and victims experiences;
- Understanding restorative justice from the perspective of community members (e.g., social workers, Elders, clergy, etc.) and why they believe restorative justice is an effective process;
- Assessing participants’ experience of racism within the justice system by measuring whether restorative justice and/or the traditional justice system is culturally responsive and what system changes are needed to address these harms;
- The impact of restorative justice processes on the mental health of participants, particularly if restorative justice processes integrate cultural sensitive practices for those belonging to Indigenous or racialized groups; and
- Victims’ pathways into restorative justice, including how they find out about restorative justice, how/whether they engage with victim services, and what their experiences and impressions of restorative justice were before entering their restorative justice process.

Importance of using both qualitative and quantitative data

Respondents generally indicated that quantitative data should be developed in conjunction with qualitative research because there are many aspects of restorative justice that only qualitative data can capture. As a few respondents said, reducing recidivism is an objective, but not necessarily the main goal of restorative justice. The true positive impacts of restorative justice, such as both offenders and victims being able to move beyond the pain of the crime are more difficult to quantify than recontact with the justice system. One idea was to develop a kind of “Chicken Soup for the Soul” book, to delve into stories about the benefits of restorative justice and share them, such as how justice was achieved and how the parties involved were able to heal. In working with referral sources, such as Crown prosecutors, a few respondents said that what was effective in changing attitudes towards restorative justice was not quantitative reports on recidivism reduction, but rather one case where one prosecutor had seen some great change in an offender, and they remember that case.

To fully leverage qualitative data, respondents mentioned the importance of expertise in qualitative research. In-house satisfaction surveys are helpful, but investing in this research and working with skilled qualitative researchers will greatly increase the understanding of restorative justice and how it may enhance justice and promote its use to various decision makers.

3.5 Use of restorative justice for serious offences

While most of the discussion on analytical capacity focused on restorative justice generally, respondents were also asked about the use of restorative justice for serious criminal offences. Examples of serious offences, according to respondents, were domestic violence and intimate partner violence, impaired driving, sexual offences, and weapons offences. In some jurisdictions, restorative justice programs can accept these types of serious offences, but in other jurisdictions, restorative justice programs are prohibited from accepting them (therefore, this also needs to be addressed in cross-jurisdictional analysis). Usually, these restrictions are based on diversion protocols developed by provincial/territorial governments, or the policies of referral sources, such as the police or the Crown.

What we heard:

Lack of research on the use of restorative justice for serious offences is a data gap

Given the restrictions put in place in some jurisdictions, the need for research and evaluation to understand the impact of restorative justice on participants involved in serious offences is even more important. These restrictions demonstrate that barriers remain in measuring the effectiveness of restorative justice to address these cases. Evidence and research are thus needed to address the concerns about using restorative justice for all offences, and to better understand the limitations and benefits of using restorative justice to resolve these cases specifically. In addition, addressing serious offences through restorative justice requires experienced and trained facilitators and further research to identify the needs of participants and programs. Data on using restorative justice for these cases could help justify funding for more extensive training.

Research is needed to understand trends in the use of restorative justice. This is even more important now given changing attitudes and policy for serious offences, as more restorative justice programs are

able to receive referrals. Outcome studies and qualitative research are also needed to better understand the impacts of restorative justice on participants in cases involving serious offences. Having this research may address some respondents' policy concerns. For example, in one discussion, a restorative justice practitioner from a jurisdiction with restrictions recounted their experience of conferring with Crown counsel about appropriate cases to refer to restorative justice. They noted that some of those cases involved sexual offences. They recounted their frustration with the Crown not being able to refer the case because of protocols banning the use of restorative justice for these types of cases. They said that having objective evidence on the effectiveness of restorative justice in these cases would be helpful to change minds, change policy, and change the scope of the use of restorative justice in their jurisdiction.

The use of restorative justice for hate-motivated crimes should be identified and studied

In the few years preceding the engagement, the number of hate crimes increased substantially in Canada.¹³ Participants discussed instances of a restorative justice processes being used to resolve a hate-motivated crime, such as offensive graffiti spray-painted in a public setting.¹⁴ Having representation at the conference or circle from members of the community affected by the hate-motivated crime was extremely powerful, and participants mentioned the suitability of restorative justice to address these crimes, given its focus on restoring communities. If restorative justice programs were able to identify cases addressing hate crimes in their data collection, researchers would be able to identify increases in hate crime referrals and cases. In addition, analysis of outcomes and the impacts of restorative justice on offenders and victims of hate crime could be a useful evidentiary tool to address concerns from referral sources and the public that restorative justice would not be suitable for addressing this type of crime.

3.6 Promoting research and relationship building

A few respondents mentioned that, while more analytical work on restorative justice is needed, considerable research is already available on restorative justice. Whether it is the evaluations done for the Indigenous Justice Program, or research papers and evaluations completed by government departments, or through partnering with academics, there is a body of published research in Canada.¹⁵ The main problem raised by respondents, however, is that this research seems to have received little attention and has had limited impact.

What we heard:

Promoting research is key to maximizing impact

As some respondents pointed out, how to translate research results into practice and influence policy is one of the goals of the National Restorative Justice Research Network. This means ensuring that

¹³ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240313/dq240313b-eng.htm>

¹⁴ <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd16-rr16/p1.html>

¹⁵ For more information on restorative justice research and resources, see: [Indigenous Justice Program \(https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/acf-fca/ajs-sja/index.html\)](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/acf-fca/ajs-sja/index.html); [What is restorative justice? - Canada.ca \(https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/services/you-csc/restorative-justice/what-is-restorative-justice.html\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/services/you-csc/restorative-justice/what-is-restorative-justice.html); [Increasing the Use of Restorative Justice in Criminal Matters in Canada - Baseline Report \(https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2020-resjus-jusrep/index-en.aspx\)](https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2020-resjus-jusrep/index-en.aspx).

research reports on restorative justice are promoted and accessible to stakeholders (key officials at government ministries, academics, restorative justice partners such as referral agencies, etc.) and the public so that the results are considered when decisions are being made about using restorative justice. One respondent noted that it is important to put findings into plain language to ensure that the research is understood, because many restorative justice stakeholders do not have a research background. To that end, building the necessary relationships to advance research findings is critical.

Developing relationships is a necessary step to building research capacity

Some respondents emphasized the importance of building relationships in promoting and improving research. Establishing connections between researchers interested in restorative justice, restorative justice programs, government departments that provide restorative justice services, and the communities themselves can help build a strong foundation to make the necessary improvements. These relationships can help improve data collection, ensure the research is relevant, and help to promote and leverage findings to improve the delivery of restorative justice services and increase its use in the criminal justice system.

For restorative justice programs, many participants have said that they have difficulty developing more advanced analytical work (such as outcome studies, qualitative research, etc.) on their own, given the limitations in funding and staff expertise. In addition, a few respondents said that they would like their data holdings to be analyzed independently, to assess the quality of the data that are currently out there, and where they can improve. Thus, the possibility of partnering with experienced researchers and to have statistical work funded from organizations outside their program are important opportunities that should be pursued. Likewise, to increase the accessibility and relevance of research, researchers should try to include restorative justice practitioners and administrators in the design phase of statistical research.

The need for relationship building is particularly acute for data on victims, where less information is available than for offenders. A few respondents noted that it was important for restorative justice programs to collaborate with other groups (such as victim services, correctional services, Statistics Canada, academics, the new research network) that might also gather data on victims. Some suggested working together to find new ways to capture data on victims, perhaps through multiple mechanisms. For example, a respondent mentioned that storytelling for victims is important to qualitative research of restorative justice. Similarly, another respondent said focus groups with victims allow them to share their experiences and connect with each other.

Conclusion

Restorative justice continues to be an important approach to justice and interest in its use has grown, particularly with more serious offences. More research and resources are thus needed to support using restorative justice effectively in the criminal justice system. This is reinforced by the Deputy Ministers' target of a 5 percent increase in restorative justice referrals and accepted cases. While the annual jurisdictional scan offers some analyses on restorative justice indicators and progress in the 5 percent target, the findings from the engagement of this restorative justice data project reveal that more research is needed to better understand the potential and the outcomes of restorative justice. This

report explores the current data holdings in Canada, analyzes restorative justice data and the limitations of the data, and recommend ways to improve the use and practice of restorative justice in Canada. The restorative justice data project also explored the research needs of restorative justice programs across Canada. From the discussions with the restorative justice program representatives across Canada, Statistics Canada developed 26 different detailed recommendations to strengthen data collection and research on restorative justice in Canada (see Appendix A).

The findings on restorative justice data holdings reveal that a number of data elements about restorative justice are collected by restorative justice case management systems. However, more discussions are needed to address incomplete data and information on victims. Nonetheless, almost all programs collect core restorative justice indicators (such as the number of referrals and accepted cases). This lends support to the potential for a larger national project of collecting standard national indicators. The findings from the discussions show that the majority of programs follow the general Working Group on Restorative Justice definition of restorative justice. However, more analysis is needed to address the diversity of the programs under the restorative justice umbrella, particularly to include Indigenous Justice Programs and non-affiliated programs associated with the Working Group on Restorative Justice. It is important to expand the inclusion of restorative justice programs for research, especially programs that focus more on offender accountability, and differentiate between cases with and without victim participation.

The report also extensively covers the need for more disaggregated data, qualitative research, and outcome and return on investment studies to fully understand the use, value, and efficacy of restorative justice. Some suggested promoting more research in these areas. This could be achieved by building relationships and collaborating with other programs, academics, and researchers.

Overall, Statistics Canada received an exceptional response from the restorative justice community to this engagement. Many respondents were keen to express their thoughts, criticisms, and experiences of restorative justice. The response rate of 45 percent is considered fairly high. As one respondent put it:

Sometimes it can be difficult to get people to care about data, but when it comes to restorative justice that is not a problem. Those who work in restorative justice or with restorative justice data are very motivated individuals, and very driven to collect data to speak on the restorative justice piece to showcase how important it is. Statistics Canada and Justice Canada should continue to support the current work by building the foundation, and work on filling the gaps mentioned by expanding use of restorative justice data.

Annex 1: List of Key and Detailed Recommendations

1. Key Recommendations

<p>Investments in system enhancement are needed to strengthen restorative justice data holdings. For example, some case management systems operate in a centralized format which assists in reporting. Investments in system enhancements will require funding for case management systems to help programs increase automation, reduce the burden on staff, and improve data quality.</p>
<p>Differences in definitions should be noted in the analysis, though most programs follow the Working Group on Restorative Justice definition of restorative justice. For example, rather than present restorative justice caseloads as a global entity, it would be beneficial for restorative justice cases to be categorized into subsets or groupings of cases. Proposed groupings include restorative justice cases involving Indigenous people, restorative justice cases with victims participating, and restorative justice cases without victims participating. These groupings would provide more useful context for researchers and data users.</p>
<p>There is capacity to develop a national survey of restorative justice in Canada, as all programs maintained the statistical information necessary to determine the number of referrals, the number of accepted cases, and some information on participants. To facilitate this development, a logical next step would be to draft a national restorative justice data standards document that addresses differences between definitions and highlights the critical information to be collected.</p>
<p>More investment in research is needed to improve and expand restorative justice programs. Current data collection, with the exception of data on victims, is adequate to move forward with a wide range of statistical projects. The findings of the report highlight the need for the following types of analyses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcome studies, including recidivism and desistance¹⁶ indicators, including not just outcomes for offenders, but for victims as well;• Return on investment and social return on investment studies, comparing results with the traditional criminal justice system;• Qualitative research and feedback from participants on the impact of restorative justice, among other questions.

¹⁶ Desistance refers to the concepts of an individual with a criminal history reducing or refraining from crime.

Research can help restorative justice programs improve their services, raise awareness and support to increase restorative justice referrals, and provide justifications for funding support.

Promoting findings and developing relationships are key components of establishing a research strategy. When publishing research, leveraging research findings with criminal justice decision makers and the public should be a key component. Establishing dialogues and networks, such as the National Restorative Justice Research Network, will play a key role in advancing awareness about and research on restorative justice.

Detailed Recommendations

Below are a series of detailed recommendations for each section of the report, stemming from discussions with respondents.

1. System Characteristics

1.1 Systems design has a strong foundation for developing statistical analysis at the program level, because microdata are held electronically. However, not all data is centralized at the provincial/territorial level. To improve responsiveness for statistical analysis at a provincial/territorial level, it is recommended that government ministries and supported programs work together to address these concerns and develop systems that centralize microdata where possible.

1.2. Training, funding, and resources need to be considered when transitioning to a new software or case management system. User-friendly case management systems are needed when entering data, as well as systems that are designed to enter data on victims as well.

2. Data collected

2.1 Overall, most programs collect comprehensive data on referrals and accepted cases and demographic information on offenders is adequate. Acquiring demographic information on victims is difficult for restorative justice programs because of the sensitive nature of asking victims for their data after the offence. Restorative justice programs should seek out promising practices to address this and other barriers to collecting data on victims, given that restorative justice is intended to address the needs of those harmed by crime. Programs should concentrate on ensuring that they collect as much data on victim participation. This includes precise data on victims' involvement in a case, reasons for victims not participating, and type of victim participation. Developing national data standards can help facilitate this by identifying the key information to collect and establishing common definitions.

3. Definitions

3.1 Exploring terminology in data collection should be further explored. Some jurisdictions use the terms "person responsible for causing harm" and "person harmed" in place of "offender" and "victim," because these terms may better reflect restorative justice principles for their programs. Other programs

use the terms “accused,” “offender,” and “victim,” given how the criminal justice system uses of restorative justice.

3.2 Most programs participating in the engagement adhere to the Working Group on Restorative Justice definition of restorative justice. While it is recognized that the concerns about keeping the definitions of restorative justice consistent, programs do conform to a broad definition of restorative justice. Based on the discussions, the Working Group on Restorative Justice’s definition of restorative justice adequately describes the work of all participating programs and is recommended for use for statistical analyses.

3.3 Given the differences in approaches to restorative justice across the country, it is recommended that the breakdowns of restorative justice by the type of programs and clients served are accounted for when analyzing this data. This important context increases the relevance of the statistical reporting, particularly for Indigenous communities and for programs requiring victims’ involvement.

3.4 Definitions of victim participation may not be consistent, particularly with front-line data collection, who may not be provided with comprehensive definitions of different levels of participation. Clear definitions of the various forms of victim participation should be developed. Including various descriptive scenarios to clarify how victim participation should be classified could be very effective.

3.5 Definitions of what a successful completion of restorative justice cases vary considerably across restorative justice programs. Thus, how that success is measured, based on definitions used by individual restorative justice programs, more research should be done to understand the determinants of restorative justice program outcomes.

4. Data Quality Assessment

4.1 Based on the discussions, recommendations to improve data accuracy include multi-step review processes (as some restorative justice programs have implemented), and training staff to conduct data validation processes and data cleaning.

4.2 Although data are processed and entered quickly, some respondents suggested that a streamlined approach is needed, from referral forms to accepted cases, to further increase efficiency. To improve efficiency in data collection, it is recommended that electronic referral forms are developed as well as making certain fields mandatory.

4.3 Many programs indicated that they would benefit from funding to develop and enhance systems, or to provide common software. To improve data quality, it is recommended that funding is made available to restorative justice programs to increase the use of automation.

5. Standard National Indicators

5.1 To ensure that the appropriate information is accessible and consistently defined, restorative justice programs would benefit from developing national data standards. These would highlight the key data points to collect and the ideal definitions to use. The Working Group on Restorative Justice should identify a core set of indicators for the upcoming 2024–25 jurisdictional scan. The data collected from the jurisdictional scan can pave the way for a national project on restorative justice.

5.2 National data collection should include information from as many restorative justice programs as possible, extending beyond programs funded directly by government. If it is challenging to fully report all restorative justice programs, researchers should evaluate the possibility of using estimation methods.

5.3 Funding will be required to support the development of national data standards and definitions, as well as collecting, processing, and analyzing this information.

6. Disaggregated Data

6.1 Disaggregating data analysis of restorative justice participants based on age, gender, Indigenous identity, and racialized identity should be done where possible to identify underserved communities and to better understand the effects of restorative justice processes on different populations. This work can yield valuable information to improve restorative justice services for different communities.

6.2 Disaggregated data analysis is hindered by its lower quality of data, particularly for Indigenous identity and racialized identity for both restorative justice programs and other criminal justice programs with which restorative justice is compared. Improving disaggregated data collection should be supported and encouraged, where possible.

7. Outcome Studies

7.1 Broad support for developing recontact studies, desistance studies, and comparisons with other justice programs is recommended. Most restorative justice programs have underlying data that can facilitate this work. Researchers should work with restorative justice programs to address data sharing and privacy concerns about integrating data.

7.2 Outcome studies should not be the sole focus of research into the effectiveness of restorative justice. Where possible, this work should be integrated with other research (return on investment, qualitative research, etc.).

7.3 Developing outcome studies for victims is of interest, with a particular focus on health, educational, and socio-economic outcomes. Researchers interested in victim issues should work together to develop a project design for consideration.

7.4 Return on Investment and Social Return on Investment studies are effective tools for communicating the “value for money” of restorative justice to make the case for more funding to increase the capacity of the restorative justice services. Return on investment studies are complex research and will require funding support. In addition, data integration between restorative justice and

other datasets is required to build return on investment formulas. The privacy and data sharing considerations of restorative justice programs will also need to be addressed.

8. Qualitative Data

8.1 Qualitative analysis is greatly valued by the restorative justice community. To maximize data collection and leverage findings, funding will be required to work with experts (e.g., academics, practitioners, consultants, policy and research analysts, etc.) and staff working in restorative justice who are interested in examining and advancing restorative justice.

8.2 To better define research requirements and provide guidance, it would be appropriate to have researchers work with restorative justice programs, Indigenous community-based justice programs, persons with lived experiences, victim-serving organizations, and other stakeholders to identify the most appropriate research questions to address.

9. Use of Restorative Justice for Serious Offences

9.1 Most programs can identify cases in their programs involving serious offences. Offences of interest should be identified and communicated to programs by developing national data requirements, to ensure that they can be tracked and to make it easier to identify them when compiling internal data.

9.2 Detailed analysis, as a subset of any outcome study, comparative study, return on investment study, qualitative data study, or as a stand-alone research project, should be done for cases involving serious offences to better understand the effectiveness of restorative justice in resolving these specific cases.

10. Promoting Research and Relationship Building

10.1: Working with partners, understanding operational needs, and promoting restorative justice research should be emphasized and built into the design, implementation, and dissemination of research projects.

10.2: Establishing a National Restorative Justice Research Network should be supported to develop data, ensure the research is relevant, promote findings, and maximize the impact of the research.